

RELIGION

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the shrine since the beginning of the last harvest is made into beer for this occasion. Our Fenikang informants told us that the king should himself come to their village for this rite, and the above short description is mainly from notes made at Fenikang. But, whatever the theory, the usual practice at the present day is for the king to send the animals given to Nyakang to the shrines, and for the *bareth* to pray for rain as they are sacrificed.

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We are indebted to Yangjok, one of the most important of the Shilluk chiefs, for the following account of the rain ceremony as it is held at Acop, where stands one of the *kengo Nyakang*. A bullock, or bull, and a hen are killed before the shrine of Nyakang, each animal being killed by one of the *bareth Nyakang*. Before the ceremony the ground within the shrine enclosure and that outside the fence is swept clean by a number of old women. Drums are placed in the open space near the centre of the village and men and women dance vigorously, first holding spears and other weapons, then raising their hands, singing and praising Nyakang. If there is a tree in the open space the sacrificial bullock is tied to it. At the end of the dance the chief of the district pours water, recently brought from the river, into the hollow of his hand, spits into it, and sprinkles the bullock with this. The bullock is speared high up in the flank, so that the wound is not immediately fatal, and is allowed to go free. If he wanders towards the river it is a good sign, and if he falls on his left side, or goes towards the shrine of Nyakang, it is good, but if he falls on his right side it is bad; in theory the bullock should go to the river and come back to die where he was speared, and it seemed that in practice little difficulty was experienced by the practised Shilluk herdsmen in guiding the victim in the right direction. The beast is skinned and cut up where it falls, and the flesh is boiled and eaten by all except pregnant women and their husbands and men and women who have had intercourse during the previous night. Care is taken not to break the bones, which with all fragments are thrown into the river. The head, one forelimb, and the bowels compose the share of the attendants of the shrine, who cook and eat their portions with the rest of the community. The skin is prepared and used as a mat in the hut of Nyakang, where the sacred spear is kept with which the sacrificial animals are killed.

At the harvest festival it is usual to bring ears of ripening millet and to thrust them into the thatch of certain of the huts constituting

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775 victim into a crocodile to be a spouse to one of her crocodile relatives.
825 Yet Nikaiya brings luck to those whom she visits by night to ask for fire; if a barren woman bears a child after such a visit it will be called
776 Nikaiya, and the father will kill a sheep and throw it into the river.
782 Nikaiya is known by her short stout figure and great muscular develop-
825 ment, and by the fact that she "eats" (mouths) her words. That the river is the true home of Nikaiya is shown by the manner of sacrificing to her; for as a sacrifice would be made at the shrine of Nyakang, or at the grave shrine of any Shilluk king, if Nyakang or one of the kings had appeared in a dream—or if a king had "possessed" a man causing him to become ill—so when Nikaiya becomes immanent sacrifice is made by throwing a live sheep, with its legs bound, into the river.

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776 Hofmayr states that the *bareth* may divine that a new-born infant has been sent by Nikaiya; if a boy it will then be called Nikaiyo, if a girl Nikaiya.¹ When such a child grows up and becomes betrothed an offering must be made to Nikaiya as part of the wedding ceremony. The couple go to the river, where the *bareth* slaughters a male black and white sheep, smears the young people with the contents of the stomach, and fastens the ear-lobes with beads on to the feet of the bride. Beer, tobacco, earth, and parts of the sacrifice are thrown into the river for Nikaiya, and the betrothed bathe in the river. They are then conducted by the *bareth* to a house prepared for them in the bride's village, and must remain there for three or four days.²

776 There is a limited cult of the Dinka god, Dengdit, perhaps confined to the southern part of the country. Fig. 2 of Pl. IX represents
794 a shrine to Dengdit in Odong hamlet, not far from Fenikang, and we
171 both saw and heard of other instances. The example figured is,
[778] as far as we could determine, unlike any Shilluk shrine and was said to be of Dinka pattern. The present incumbent took over the shrine at the death of his grandmother, a Dinka woman, who had been possessed by Dengdit to whom she erected the shrine. The iron
[782] bracelets shown in the photograph have all been brought by Shilluk, who visit the shrine in considerable numbers. No doubt the possession of the present incumbent resembles the Shilluk possession by their *ror* (kings).

776 We should also mention the spirits of the bush and river, i.e. creatures resembling mankind in form but with non-human functions

¹ Op. cit., 277.

² Hofmayr, op. cit., 391.

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776 and habitat. The spirits of the bush are we believe in the main unimportant, but the river people and their river cattle play a more considerable part in the mythology of the people. One of the groups
776 of people whom Nyakang found in the land were fish-men, or river-
773 men with the power of turning into fish, while the mysterious cows whose dung provided the "ashes of denying" (p. 102) had their original home in the river.

643 It is convenient to consider the cult of the dead Shilluk kings apart
769 from that of Nyakang at his cenotaph shrines, but it must be
776 remembered that in every king there is immanent the spirit of Nyakang, so that the worship rendered them at their grave shrines is ultimately only part of the cult of Nyakang.

778 Like the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang the royal grave shrines are
764 called *kengo*, as opposed to the graves of commoners for which the
643 word is *roro*.¹ Though smaller, they resemble the shrines of Nyakang
[346] in appearance, for the roofs of their constituent huts terminate in
ostrich egg and spear-head. The guardians or priests (*bareth*) of
[743] these shrines are of the same class as those of the *kengo* Nyakang,
viz. elderly women, often widows of the dead king, and old men,
his former servants, or their descendants who have reached the
requisite age, or, as a last resource when none of these can be found,
old women or old men not specially connected with the dead king.
Just as no one except the *bareth* Nyakang is allowed to enter the
shrines of Nyakang, so no stranger may enter the royal grave shrines.
[644] A royal daughter never becomes a guardian of a shrine, but she may
enter the grave shrine of her dead father and rub her hands on its
floor for a blessing whenever she likes, as may the royal sisters.
It seemed that these privileges did not extend to the shrines of other
dead kings, nor even to the enclosed space around them. Should the
spirit of a dead king appear to a royal daughter or sister in a dream
• [787] and demand an offering, she would take a sheep to the guardians of
the tomb and give it to one of them to sacrifice in the same way as
a commoner. There are cattle belonging to the grave shrines of
[782] the kings, and offerings are made as at the shrines of Nyakang. Thus,
when the millet crop threatens to fail, or epidemic sickness to attack
the cattle, Nyakang or one of his successors will appear to someone
in a dream and demand a sacrifice. This is told to the king, who will
immediately send a cow and a bullock to one or more of the shrines

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643] ¹ So kings do not "die", but "go away", and in addressing the king a special court language is employed.

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this time no big dances or festivities should be held. Any small matters arising are dealt with by the most important chiefs, but great affairs must stand over until the appointment of the new king. Meanwhile, the selection of the new king has been going forward; theoretically this is in the hands of the chiefs of the ten districts into which the Shilluk territory is divided, but unofficially many give advice, and there is much intrigue. How far the choice is thought to be inspired is uncertain, but certain portents might occur if the wrong man were chosen, e.g. the effigy of Nyakang, to be described immediately, might become too heavy to be moved, while a method of selection has been described which may be regarded as indicating supernatural sanction. As many small stones as there are candidates are thrown into a fire, and each stone is given a name, the stone of the chosen candidate remaining after the others have burst out of the fire; or, according to another account, the kingship is determined by the colour the stones assume—red (for cattle) or white (for plentiful crops) or red and white. The decision is come to secretly. One of the district chiefs then seeks the king-elect in his village by night and bids him to single combat, really a sham fight; only when he has shown his mettle does the chief signify to him that he has been chosen as sovereign. The king-elect should remain in his village until all is ready for his installation.

Meanwhile messengers have been sent to Akurwa, near the northern limit of the Shilluk country, to bid the Akurwa people bring the sacred four-legged stool from the shrine of Nyakang in their village, and also the effigy called "Nyakang", which is kept wrapped in the common cotton cloth of the Sudan. The effigy, with that of his son Dag, and the sacred stool, are carried southwards towards Fashoda; each night the effigy is placed upon the stool, but by day the objects are borne upon men's shoulders, and as they march the men sing songs commemorating Nyakang and his deeds.¹ The party bearing the sacred objects may seize anything they like on the way, but it seems that their wants are so freely provided for in the villages they pass that they scarcely exercise their prerogative.

As the procession approaches Fashoda the king-elect, with the *ororo*, betakes himself to Debalo village, which he enters treading upon a leopard skin spread for that purpose, and goes directly to a hut

¹ Nyakang appears in a dream to one of the *karakh* of the Akurwa shrine and prescribes the songs to be sung; no doubt among these will be some of those recorded by Hofmeyr, *op. cit.*, 403, et seq.

643 specially built for him. Here he should stay for about a month
796 (Papit, the present king, stayed only four nights), spending much
time in communion with Nyakang, giving many presents though
receiving few, and abundantly exercising his right of amnesty.

[372] A ceremonial fire is made by friction, *ororo* and *kwareth* working
together, from which brands are taken—by the *ororo* to start a fire
in front of the hut in which the king is staying, by the *kwareth* for
a fire in the centre of the village, and by commoners for a fire in a
millet field near the king's hut. The purpose of these fires—we
quote verbatim from Mr. Heasty's letter—is "to keep anyone from
taking the king's life before he is crowned". It is generally said
that a brand from one of these fires is carried to Fashoda, but this
is not so; Mr. Heasty discovered that the fire-sticks (one an old
spear-handle) are carefully wrapped up and taken to Fashoda by the
ororo, together with offerings of cattle. After the king has reached
Fashoda all the fires in the village are put out; a cow is taken to the
house of Nyakang as offering, together with the fire-sticks, and by
means of the latter a new fire is kindled by the *ororo* and *kwareth*.
• [787] If this starts quickly it is a good omen and the king will live long;
if the fire is long in kindling it is a sign that Nyakang is not well
pleased with the new king and that his reign is likely to be short and
troubled.

[492] The king-elephant is escorted to Fashoda riding a black ox; on reaching
the *khor* nearby he stops and awaits the arrival of the party from
Akurwa, now swollen to a procession, who approach singing ancient
sacred songs. From now on, until the entry to Fashoda, it becomes
increasingly difficult to follow details of the ceremony. Mr. Munro's
account is most valuable, and is printed as an Appendix, but he points
out that the crowd was so dense that he could not see everything.
Probably a black ox is sacrificed before the *khor* (about a quarter of
a mile from Fashoda) is crossed, and it seems that there is something
in the nature of a sham fight between the party surrounding the
king-elephant and the folk bringing the effigy of Nyakang from Akurwa.
The *khor* is at last crossed, it being important that the king-elephant
should not wet his feet, and it appears that there is now a substantial
fusion of the two parties—perhaps after a further scuffle. The
king-elephant, with "Nyakang" near to him, moves forward to Fashoda,
and as he does so he treads successively on a sheep lying bound on
the ground, on an ox, and in former days on an old man who had been
caught by the *ororo* and kept bound and fasting for twenty-four

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Introduction

others one against the sun and his son; vide page 159.

When he felt his end approaching, he assembled all the chiefs of his kingdom for a splendid festival. While all were merry, suddenly a great wind arose, and scattered all those present. In this moment Nyikang took a cloth, wound it tightly round his neck, and thus choked himself.¹

But many Shilluks firmly believe that Nyikang is still alive. The Rev. Oyler writes to me: "When I asked how Nyikang died, they were filled with amazement at my ignorance and stoutly maintained that he never died. If he dies, all the Shilluks will die. He, *Dāk*, and five other kings ascended to heaven, where Nyikang prays for the Shilluks (!). They say that he disappeared as the wind".

Nyikang is the ancestor of the Shilluk nation and the founder of the Shilluk dynasty. He is worshipped, sacrifices and prayers are offered to him; he may be said to be lifted to the rank of a demi-god, though they never forget that he has been a real man. He is expressly designated as "little" in comparison with God.

In almost every village there is a little hut dedicated to Nyikang, or to some other ancient king. In form it is like the common houses, but much smaller and more slender. On its walls sometimes rough drawings in white, red, and black colour are seen, consisting simply in line-ornaments or representing animals. These drawings are made by women, with white, red and black earth, and are renewed every year before the chief prayers are offered. These huts are commonly called *kēt rī* "place of the king" i. e. of Nyikang. Besides these small huts they have a number of greater temples, which are in form like the Shilluk-hut, but of much larger size. They are found in most of the villages devoted to Nyikang. These "sacred villages" are, Akuruwar, Wau,² Fenyikang, Nyibodo (*Nyibodo*), *Otgi*, Nyelwal, *Oshōr*, *Ofige*, *Dāfige*. These houses, the small as well as the larger, are the places where Nyikang is worshipped. In them, at least in some, a number of reliques are preserved, which are considered holy and are held in great veneration. Among these are a statue of Nyikang made of ambach-wood; the holy spear, drum, and shield of Nyikang, a digging stick, ancient metal ornaments and clothes, etc. Spoils from wars are also dedicated to Nyikang, and are preserved in the temples.

In times of need, when sickness or war are threatening, but above all when rain does not come in due time, the people assemble round the house of Nyikang and pray to him. This is done by dancing and at the same time singing prayers. At the beginning of the rainy season, when they are about to plant dura, the regular chief prayers take place; on this occasion an animal is slain as a sacrifice to Nyikang. Before the transaction of any serious business the elders of the village assemble around the temple of Nyikang, to ask for his counsel.

¹ Till the subjection of the Shilluks by the British all succeeding Shilluk kings have finished their lives by the same form of death.

² This Wau is not the place in the Bahr Ghazal Province, but is situated on the left bank of the White Nile between Tadmek and Kodak.

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HOW NYIKANG
IS ADORED.

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Queen Abudok

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he wanted to become king? What is chasing you?" When the people heard this, they said, "Ah, shall that man (this cowardly king) bring evil upon us?" And Akunyo Bako came, he turned towards the village, and he behaved like one possessed by a spirit.¹ But the people remained silent. Then he said, "Beat the holy drum!" But the people remained silent. One of the chiefs said, "Loosen a rope!"² And a rope was loosened by a child. When he saw that, he ran away. And the Shilluks laughed, "Indeed, he is not a king!" The Shilluks said, "Kill him!" He ran towards the bush fleeing.

45. Queen Abudok.

Keti Dikht ka fen e bēdē e by riṭ; ka Chole wijg mām; riṭ boggn. Ka tēg bēgē yi Abēdēk, ka e ko: ē wiṭe wgn a mām yi byie riṭ. A kōbi kine: kwāni riṭ! A kwāni, a riṭi. A kēle, gn Abudok, a dwai tēp, a māj, a wūāl, a pēgi yale tēp; ka a tēme dūgn, a pēgi, ka aṭṭp e chōgō, e ba pañ. A kēl aṭṭm tēp, a pēgi, a pāni; a kēti Bachōde, a wei gō fen. A kōbi kine: ē, Chole y nūni yi kwa riṭ. A bāne nūni kwa riṭ. A kōbi: ē, kwa riṭ rē y lēgō mēgō, ka ni gēdi ki būte pāri, fēri ni dōyi dōyi, ka e nūni. U nēi bat kēn, y nēi pāl. A bāne nūni a nēni. — Kwāni Abēdēk.

In the time of Dōkēt the country was without a king. And the Shilluks did not know what to do, because there was no king. And the people came to (queen) Abudok, saying, "Alas, we are in confusion from not having a king!" She said, "Take this one (pointing to one of her younger brothers) for a king!" So he was taken, he was elected. Abudok went away. She brought seeds of the water-lily, spread them out in the sun, and ground them. She put them into a bag, the bag was very big, so that, when she put the seeds in, the bag remained unfilled. Then she brought a small bag, poured the seeds in, and it was filled. Now she went to Fashoda with the bag, and put it down there. She said, "Ah, the Shilluks will be decreased by the descendants of the king. In future time the descendants of the king will become many. She said again, "Eh, the descendants of the king will be like a sickness (to the Shilluks), if they build their village beside your (the Shilluks') village, your village will become very small, it will decrease. But they (the royal family) will become many, just as the branches of the calabash plant become many in the bush." Therefore the descendants of the king have become so many. — This is the story of Abudok.

[Explanation given by the man who told this story: "Abudok was a bad queen, and the Shilluks did not like her; they wanted a king. So Abudok presented to them one of her two younger brothers, whom she raised (educated), saying, "Take this one for your king." Abudok went away

¹ When the new king is elected, the spirit of Nyikang takes possession of him; this is manifested by a shaking of the body, singing, etc.

² Loosen a rope to thrash him!

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Preparation for War

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bank. Then the milk is poured into the river, and a club is stuck into the ground in the river. The sorcerer goes into the river, and says, "Bring the cattle!" Now the ambach boats are thrown into the river, and the sorcerer lies down in the middle of the river. The cattle swim (behind the boats). The sorcerer sings a song of the crocodile; the crocodiles belong to his family (to the family, the clan of the sorcerer).

When they have arrived on the other side, an enclosure is erected, and the cows are tied to their pegs. Then another sorcerer is called, and he performs his witchery on account of thieves (to keep off thieves). The cattle are seized, a cow-house is built, and that is all, the people settle in this place, a place with grass.

66. Preparation for War.

Lén kpi é chágí, ajwógg ní de dwái, ká ñk gón, ka e bñg, ka dyek gwách, ka tñ gwách, ka yai bñg, ká ñk kpi. Ka tñ mñ pñ, ka tñ akyel mñ pñ; ka akpi twóchè rí: Ka yai e bñg, ka kela xá ñk; akete ya mál, e tuojo bwól tñ. Námó mák yí akpi, ka ní chip wdi, ka náne a ní mak ní chip wái. Ka jé chágí kí ñk. Ka tin, ka yai kófi: fñke fñ. Ka onwók kwón, ka táyè fñ, ka yeje kák, ka wije nól, ka wdi kál wók, ka ní lén keje jé. Ka wích onwók ka kwón yí ajwógg, ka ní lén fón gni kí nim yái. U' yik wiche onwók y nñg kundo fón gni, ka yé kine: fón gni de chýkú, kwóf ajwógg. U' yik wiche onwók y nñó kun adi lén, ye kine: lén rach! Ka ajwógg e fñkú kál, ka yech kál, ka ló, ka mñk chiki kótú, ka ajwógg kégó, ka onwón mñk kál, ka nñk, ka wije chiki (cheki) wétú, ká lén yí ajwón gni, ka e ko: ñk! Dwai tñ bñg! Ka tñ bñg. Ka wái kwóné, ka gó tñ ré tñ. Ka e kégó. Ka wích onwók ka y kwón fñ. Ka pi fñ, ká gó tñ ré tñ.

When a hostile army comes near, the sorcerer is sent for, and cows are loosened (are given to him), and when he comes, goats and spears are collected (and given him). Then the people come; a rope is made, and a spear is stuck into the ground; the rope is fastened to its top; now the people come, and pass below the rope. The rope is above, it is tied to the point of the spear. The man who is touched by the rope (in passing below it), is placed separately. (All these do not go into the war, because they would be killed). Thus the people walk (below the rope) a long time, till all have passed. Presently the sorcerer says to the people, "Sit down!" A he-goat is brought, and is thrown on the ground. It is cut up, and its head is cut off; the contents of its stomach are taken out, and are thrown among the people; the head of the he-goat is taken by the sorcerer, and thrown towards the hostile country, in the face of the assembled people. If the head of the he-goat points in the direction of the country of the

*539 enemy, it is said: "The country (of the enemy) will be defeated;" that is the
 721 talk of the sorcerer. But if the head of the he-goat points towards their own
 ●787 army, they say, "It is a bad war!" In this case the sorcerer makes his witchery
 once more, grass is brought, and is tied on a rope, and after that it is tied again;
 then the sorcerer goes to bring another he-goat, it is killed, and its head is
 again thrown, and when the sorcerer sees (that it is in the right direction now),
 he says, "All right! Let all the people come!" The people come, the contents
 of the stomach are taken, and are thrown on the bodies of the people. Then
 the sorcerer goes. The head of the he-goat is buried in the ground; and water
 is put on the fire, and sprinkled on the people.

[727] Now the army goes to fight. And people are killed, the army is defeated.
 The people come and bury their dead. Then they remain (in arms). Another
 sorcerer is sent for; cattle are given to him. And he works (his witchery), he
 is a most powerful sorcerer. When he has finished his doings, the army goes
 +539 to fight again. Now they defeat the enemies and kill many people; after that
 728 they come and return home; they are satisfied. The people go to the king, a
 royal ambassador is called (and sent to the chief of the enemies), the people
 make amends for the men they have killed, they pay twenty cows; they go to
 loosen them, then they return home, and sit down.¹

¹ After a war (among different Shilluk tribes) each army makes amends to the hostile tribe for the people that have been killed; these amends consist in a number of cattle.

*539 the man of Adokong,¹ and the king said, "Ah!" Then came the man of Ningaro, he said: "Well, bring water!" And water was brought. He washed himself, he washed his hands (as a preparation for eating food); then he took the beans out and ate them. Nyadwai said, "Kill all the other witch-doctors!"² And they were killed.

In the time of the reigning of king Yo, some Dinka man whose name was Lengyang, came into the Shilluk country, and lived there. He was a sorcerer. Towards the end of his reigning Yo ordered the sorcerer to be brought, and he killed him (on account of his sorcery). On that a war arose with the Dinkas, and they fought at Tonga; Tonga was destroyed. Then the king said, "The whole army shall go!" And the Dinkas ran away.

69. The Vision of the Sorcerer.

*787 There was a certain man whose name was Wet Kwa Oket, he was also called
*539 Agweratyep, a very strong man; he was a sorcerer. One day he had a vision, and he said, "The white people come!" And the white people came, the country was destroyed by them. And he died, and was mourned; but before he died, he said, "Ah, the chieftainship shall be taken over by Ajalong after my death. But the man who kills me by his witchcraft, he too shall die after me." And he was mourned, and his steer fell under the dom palm.³ And the man who had bewitched him, was struck by lightning, and died; for he had been cursed by the sorcerer. And all the people believed in him, saying, "Agweratyep is a strong man indeed!" The medicine men were afraid, and so the village lived in a peaceful condition.³

70. Agok.

*539 Juok' chuepla Agok, mātī tñ jal yať. Jal mēkē bēda ajwōgō, ka deań ywōbe, ka deań ye tayı fēa. Ka jē reńa kal, ka jē ko: ē, Agōk, deań a taw. Kīne: e neke yi nō? Kīne: kiñ. Chēń jē! Ka jē chēń; ka e ko: nātē, faťe yin a ywōp deań? Kīne: yan! Kīne: kīpańg? Kīne: yā pātī yín! Kīne: hē, yi ha pyēlo, wat tyau, nīni lēch! yi re chōk yī yēbō kī dō tēre? Yā fańe yin au, mā lēch. Kīne, ē, de wā tūm! Kē, chōl! A chōl kī gēk dōpēk.

Ka jal gni e kēdō, ka bē gōte yi ywōdō. Ka jal gni tūk yi Agok, kīne: nātē, kē jal yať chīnē! Kā ē bēdō, chuepla gēn a lāk. Ka mēpl ka e kēdō, ka gin gni ywōde yi ywōdō. Gē gōl fēa, ka bīa pach. Ka e kōbō kīne: giche mēkē e gōl yi ywōdō yi jal yať. E ko: dāpōnd pyējī yān? Yi cha kōpō kōpō kīne: kē, jal yať a yīp ywōdō! Kīne: kē! Kīne: yi re bāń? Kīne: chuepla ga lāke yau! Kīne: ē, chēń tēre! A chēń tēre, a pēchē kīne: jal yāť, yin neka nē jē? A tyek

¹ They did not know the cause either, except the last, who found out the cause of the humming.

[754] ² The "medicine men" are the "bad sorcerers", who try to kill people by their witchery. They
[756] are called here "je yep" "men of medicine", as opposed to the *ajwōgō*, who is supposed to work for good.

³ vide Introduction.

made at all times of stress and misfortune. Everything round a shrine is sacred, especially trees - they are particularly rare in Shillukland in any case.

Certain Shilluk kings, particular incarnations of Nyikang, tend to be identified with particular species of animals. If such an animal approaches the shrine without signs of fear, it is assumed to be the form in which Nyikang appears, and a sacrifice is offered at the shrine. Almost any unusual behaviour on the part of an animal would lead the Shilluk to look on it as a temporary incarnation of Nyikang. Nyikang's mother, Nikaiva, is reputed to have been a crocodile and is believed to live in the river in that form. A sacrifice is made to her by throwing a live sheep into the river. The crocodile is generally spared even though these creatures are a danger in river crossings.

There is a limited cult of the Dinka spirit Dengait, and also a belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

Beliefs concerning the ancestral spirits are vague. Reference is made to *pan juok*, 'the country of the dead', which is reached by the spirit after long wandering through the bush, but it is also believed that the spirit persists in or around the grave. Offerings and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits by the head of a household or local lineage on behalf of the descendants. If there is sickness or misfortune or the possibility of danger, a person will pray to his ancestors and make an animal sacrifice to propitiate them.

The ancestral cult seems, however, to be overshadowed by the national cult of Nyikang and the royal ancestors.

TOTEMIC BELIEFS

Seligman suggests that Shilluk totemism may have been derived from the Dinka because it seems so slight and unimportant. According to Hofmayr and Westermann the clans appear to have totems and some clans derive themselves from an animal or fish which Nyikang took and turned into people in order to populate the country. Hofmayr states that totem animals are often killed but it is considered wrong to eat them. (1) Most totems are animals but a few are plants. Children inherit their totems from their fathers; a woman keeps hers even when she is married. (2)

MAGICAL PRACTICES

The Nitchduktor (Ajuugo)

Ajuugo means 'man of Juck'. Such people are regarded as possessing certain magical powers which they use for the good of the community. People go to them when they are in need of help and pay them for their assistance. The powers of the ajuugo are believed to be due to their

(1) Hofmayr, *Die Shilluk*, 1925, p.235.

(2) *Ibid.*

periodic possession by the spirit of the early Shilluk kings. The guardians of the shrines of Nyikang may or may not be *ajungo*, for mere connection with a shrine does not automatically make a man an *ajungo*. 756 787 791

According to Seligman when a man becomes an *ajungo* he becomes ill and has dreams. On consulting one who is already in the profession, he is told that he has in him a spirit of one of the early kings. Special ceremonies are performed, the habits and skills marking an *ajungo* are acquired, and the man begins to practise in his professional capacity. The power is frequently hereditary and a son or daughter or even a remote relative may become possessed. All witchdoctors live celibate lives whether they are male or female. According to Seligman an *ajungo* marries wives and others beget children for him. (1) Many witchdoctors are specialists in some branch of magic but some have general powers. Some of the main tasks performed by them are: to give safety on a journey, to bring success in hunting, to bring victory in war, and to detect those who will be killed in a fight and forestall their deaths. They are believed to have the power of curing disease and also to kill by magic. The witchdoctors are essential to the community as diviners and they have the ability to ward off evil spirits and bad magic. Very often an *ajungo* possesses a 'gourd of Juck', which is a gourd with a handle upon which is an iron band. The gourd is greased and some grain is put in it. When it is shaken the grain rattles and that is presumed to be Juck talking. The gourd is kept in the *ajungo*'s house and is consulted for purposes of divination. (2) 756 787

Many of the witchdoctors exert a powerful influence over the people and, in consequence of the fees they receive, are usually prosperous.

The *Jalyat*

The *jalyat*, 'the man of herbs', is a sorcerer dealing essentially in bad magic, as opposed to the good magic of the *ajungo*. The *jalyat* is greatly feared. He works in secret at night so that the Shilluk are never sure who is a *jalyat*, though they will kill anyone whom they suspect of practising sorcery. 754 [683]

The *jalyat* is thought of as being a monorchid and, as such, he should be drowned at birth. The father alone has the power to save his son. When a sorcerer has reached maturity he cannot be killed openly unless the people of his village determine to rid themselves of the evil they believe him to be causing. The power is not considered to be hereditary. The sorcerer, in practising his evil arts, uses parts of his victim's body or things closely associated with him. He makes mud effigies and pierces them or puts them in a fire and is believed by these means to destroy the persons they represent. A sorcerer may cause sickness, bring misfortune by ruining crops, by causing cattle to go barren and so forth. Sorcerers work against children in a large family and certain accidents and deaths may be caused by their machinations. The basis of the sorcerer's intentions is considered to be envy of the successful and the prosperous, whom he therefore endeavours to injure. [683]

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p. 101.
(2) Oylor, *S.N.R.*, 1920, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 114.

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should understand the more abstract notion, God, by the less abstract, Nyikang. A still clearer example of the approximation of Nyikang to God in Shilluk thought is to be found in a prayer, part of which runs:

We praise you, you who are God. Protect us, we are in your hands, and protect us, save me. You and Nikawang, you are the ones, who created, ... and it is you Nikawang, who are accustomed to assist God to save, and it is you who give the rain. The sun is yours, and the sea (river) is yours, you who are Nikawang ... The cow (for sacrifice) is here for you, and the blood will go to God and you.⁵³⁷

Here also may be seen the attribution to Nyikang of control of the sun and the river which, along with the rain mentioned in the first prayer, are the features of the Shilluk world upon which their prosperity ultimately depends, and which may help or ruin them.⁸²⁷

God, Nyikang, and the Shilluk kings seem to form a continuum in the Shilluk religious system. Nyikang is thus sometimes called *juk piny* (*piny* being earth or world) while God is either simply *juk*, or *juk mal*, God above. The Shilluk king, the representative of Nyikang, is chosen ultimately by God, as he is accepted and possessed proximately by Nyikang. A long Shilluk epic begins with the lines 'Nyikang joined with God, the election was held ...', the election being that of King Kur.⁶⁴³ There are reports of a form of election slightly different from that described earlier in this essay. In Hofmayr's account the king-elect is agreed upon by the electors much in the way described, but Nuba from Liri, with whom Nyikang formed a relationship, are said to come with pebbles, which represent those who have a right to succeed. These pebbles, one of which has been prepared beforehand to represent the chosen candidate, are thrown into the fire, and the pebble representing the king-elect turns red, or white, or red and white. Red stands for prosperity in cattle, white for good crops. The chosen prince is then challenged to fight at night and, if he acquits himself well, he is told that he is a brave man, and that God has decreed that he shall be king of the Shilluk. The installation ceremonies then proceed. At one point in them, when the king-elect enters the village of Debalo on his way to the capital at Fashoda, the chief of Debalo asks him, 'What do you want here?' and the king-elect replies, 'I am the man sent by God to rule the land of the Shilluk.'⁶⁴³ Despite the election there is thus a 'fiction' that it is God who chooses the Shilluk king and is the ultimate support of the Shilluk kingship. The order of the Shilluk kingdom depends upon Nyikang and the king, and Nyikang and the king derive their positions from God.⁷⁷⁶

The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk

The connexion between God and Nyikang is of great importance in defining the sort of 'divine kingship' which is the central feature of the Shilluk⁷⁷⁶

¹ Oyster, 1918, (II) p. 283.

² Hofmayr, 1925, p. 431.

³ Hofmayr, 1925, pp. 145 ff. Westermann, (1928, p. 122) gives an account of yet another form of election, in which sticks are placed in a fire, the one which flames most representing the king-elect.

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538 a cow, for example. In a text given by Westermann¹ the hare is taught and
 [25] saved by *juuk*. The hare (or rabbit) is said by Hofmayr to be the favourite
 figure in many Shilluk animal stories, and the stories quoted by him and by
 Westermann show how clever, and how lucky, the hare is. A story given by
 [77] Hofmayr² about the hare's eating young crocodiles appears in a different
 form in Westermann,³ where this act is attributed to Dak, the clever son
 of Nyikang. The moral of these stories is that astuteness and trickery, like
 knowledge, pay, and it seems as though unusual intelligence, ingenuity,
 and luck associate those who possess them with the divine intelligence,
 and the success for which God is the Shilluk explanation. Hofmayr gives
 as a translation for the Shilluk expression *juuk* tarv, 'that which I have
 from the highest being, my soul, my lot, luck, my other self, is favourable
 to me'.⁴ The large number of Shilluk riddles is an indication of the high
 value set on cleverness and ingenuity, and it is to be expected that these
 qualities, held up for admiration in their stories and in their daily life,
 should be ideally associated with Nyikang and their kings.

643 The kings, and all others inspired by *juuk*, are sacred because they mani-
 fest divine energy and knowledge, and they do so by being strong, cunning,
 ● 787 and successful, as well as by appearing to be in closer touch with the supra-
 986 human than are ordinary men. The signs of this closer communion are dreams
 and 'hysterical' possession, or at least some outward sign of contact with a
 superior power. Examples of behaviour showing this are numerous. In the
 installation ceremonies of 1943, when the king-elect was set on the sacred
 stool of Nyikang at a climax in the ceremony, we are told that 'the rock
 (king) was seized with a trembling fit at the critical moment, and certainly
 he appeared to be in a dazed condition immediately afterwards'.⁵ This
 [77] form of behaviour is a common sign of possession by a power greater than
 human among other Nilotic peoples. Though there was some reference
 643 in these ceremonies to the king as the source of justice, and to the ethical
 qualities necessary in a ruler, they were clearly distinct from the central re-
 ligious significance of the ceremonies. So also, though we find many refer-
 776 ences in Shilluk texts to God as the helper of the poor and the final court
 of appeal in trouble, his activity in these respects is not to be taken as an
 indication that he is only or primarily an apotropaic of ethical virtue. Many
 [72] of the hymns to Nyikang and God are laments that the land is being de-
 stroyed because they are not helping, and we are told that when their
 prayers are not answered, the Shilluk may curse Nyikang for not assisting
 them.⁶ A Shilluk proverb says that 'God throws good and evil men on a
 single string', suggesting that, in some circumstances at least, God does not
 seem to reward virtue and punish vice.⁷ In other texts he is shown as the
 ultimate sanction for customary ethical behaviour, as a helper, and as a

¹ 1922, p. 186.² Op. cit., 135.³ Howell and Thomson, 1944, p. 42.⁴ Hofmayr, 1923, p. 176.⁵ 1943, p. 176.⁶ Op. cit., p. 123.⁷ Cyprian, 1948 (II), p. 245.

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led by the guard, and then moved on to Owaci who were similarly started off, about eight hundred strong, also in four companies.

There was a large assembly unking at the meeting place, with three bullocks and four sheep for sacrifice. These were provided by the *reik* and the two factions.

Two neutral Chiefs had previously been told off to lead the factions to the meeting place which had been marked. This is important because experience has shown¹ that left to themselves the two factions will sit down about two hundred yards apart and then the memory of stolen cattle or a murdered brother will be too much for someone's self-control resulting in a flow of martial oratory. This will lead some young blood to dash forward and hurl spears or insults and there follows retaliation. If they can be got to move up close together without pause, it is obvious that the consequences of any hostilities will be so serious that anyone trying to start anything will instantly be suppressed by his wiser brethren in arms.

Both factions were finally got to sit down close up to the line and to put their shields on the ground as a sign of mutual confidence. The *reik* walked among them and briefly addressed them and they answered that they wanted peace. He was rather an impressive figure and seemed to have the situation under confident control. Some concerted hand-clapping was taken as a good sign by the public.

The *reik*'s bullock was then led between one faction and the guard, thrown on its back, held by men of both factions, opened by men of both factions and had its throat cut.² Next, a procession of neutrals was formed who took hand-fuls of the stomach contents and marched round throwing it at the factions. The next item caused most interest among the public. Thworo got up, marched round the guard and sat down touching Owaci who had the good manners to remain seated. Owaci's bull and sheep were led up, but put aside to be sacrificed at the shrine of Queen Abujok in Thworo's next day. Thworo's bull was then led up and killed just as the *reik*'s had been by persons with an active interest in the feud. Lesser folk killed the sheep, one of which got up and managed to stagger a few steps under a rain of spear thrusts. This was considered a bad omen and one by-stander recalled the abortive peace between Fasio and Fasidwai in 1925.³

This cannot be quoted as evidence of the *reik*'s executive powers, for we know that he was accompanied by the District Commissioner on this occasion, but certain interesting facts emerge. In the first place, the attitude of opposition between the two groups is clearly stressed, though it is more than probable that at proceedings of this kind a display of hostile attitudes is demanded by convention. The author indicates that the *reik* busies himself with the actual organisation of the ceremonies and certainly acts as arbitrator, visiting first one side and then the other. It is unfortunate that little mention is made of the ritual functions of the *reik*. In 1920 the Rev. D. S. Oyley described a similar peace ceremony in the settlements of Maimom, Fakoi, Ferwom, and Falo⁴ and his account of the procedure does not greatly differ from that of Tiberington. He implies throughout that the desire for peace came from the participants and there is no suggestion that peace was forced upon them, even though the *Messor*⁵ was present. 'The people of this District', he says 'were tired of con-

¹ Tiberington makes no reference to incidents from which such experience derived. It must be assumed that some peace ceremonies failed from the start.

² Shilluk say that such men concerned should stab the sacrificial ox, which is then split (gut) and the two portions divided among the respective parties. This procedure is reminiscent of all contemporary performed

in Nilotic tribes for the restoration of peaceful relations.

³ Unpublished District records by G. W. Tiberington, at Malakal, dated 1-2-33.

⁴ Oyley, the Rev. D. S. 'The Shilluk Peace Ceremony', *J.N.R.*, 1920.

⁵ *Messor* (or more probably Egyptian) administrative officer.

THE SHILLUK'S BELIEF IN THE GOOD MEDICINE MEN. 113

The man, who had been sick leans upon his staff as he walks. They then return to the house of the patient in the same way, and usually a fee is given the medicine man, and he says: "I have mine now, you will not be sick again". The patient then discards his staff, and early the next morning he goes to work again. 756

The witch doctor claims the power to kill a person by casting a charm on him, but for such a service he exacts a very heavy fee, as the risk to the witch doctor is considerable. The spirit of the departed is liable to return, and make war on the medicine man, and in the end kill him. It is necessary for the medicine man to outwit the spirit of the departed and that is accomplished by killing a chicken. The dead chicken is placed in an earthen vessel, and it is buried in the road with the bottom of the vessel up, and protruding out of the ground. This device brings protection in two ways. First every person passing the vessel is liable to carry away a bit of the curse, and in the second place the chicken has a spirit, which is greatly displeased at being killed, and it immediately decides that it is due to the departed that death was inflicted on it, and so it makes war on the spirit of the departed, and the poor shade gets so busy defending himself against the shade of the chicken that it has no opportunity to return to inflict punishment on the medicine man. Every medicine man, who passes the vessel taps it with his club. He thinks that in that way some of the power of the medicine man who put the vessel in the road will be given to him. After the death of the victim the medicine man also demands a sheep from his client, so that he can sacrifice it to help to appease the spirit of the departed. 775
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When a village is going into a fight it is very convenient to know before, who will be killed. They have at least two ways of learning this. By one method two spears are stuck in the earth. They are connected at the top by a string, and another string passes between them at the bottom. All the fighting men bearing their weapons, must pass between the spears, and if a man or his weapons touch either the spears or the string he will be killed in the fight. The second method is by the gourd of God. Many of the more successful witch doctors have a gourd of God. It is a gourd with a handle upon which is an iron band. The gourd is greased, and in it is put some grain. When the gourd is shaken 756
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726 the grain rattles, and that is God talking. The gourd is kept in
 756 the medicine man's house, and an outsider is not permitted to
 787 approach it. A small space is mudded in front of the gourd, and
 thus a little court is formed in front of it, and a mat is frequently
 placed in front of the gourd to give it greater privacy. When a
 fight is imminent the gourd of God is brought out, and each of the
 warriors casts his spoon on the gourd. For spoons they use mussel
 shells. When a spoon breaks it is a sign that the owner will be
 killed in the fight. When a bit is chipped from the spoon it is a
 sign that the owner will be wounded in the fight. When all the
 people have been tested the men who are indicated as liable to
 death are called, and they are told to bring a heavy fee, and the
 witch doctor goes through a form to avert the evil that is impending.

756 The gourd is used for other purposes as well. When a man
 789 wishes to consult the gourd of God he is conducted into the house
 by the owner of the gourd, and the first thing the suppliant does
 is to cast the gift for God on the ground, which belongs to the
 owner of the gourd. He then kneels before the altar, and makes
 known the reason for his coming. The medicine man declares that
 is easy, and that it is already accomplished, and the gourd is
 rattled at his back, and also in front of him, and is then passed
 around his head in circles.

Recourse may also be had to the gourd of God when a man is
 going on a journey. After making his approach to the gourd, and
 stating his needs the medicine man takes two spoons. One which
 is dirty represents the suppliant, the other which is clean represents
 his enemy either known or unknown. The clean spoon is then put
 in water, so that the anger of the enemy will be cooled, and his
 thoughts will not be so bitter. Knotted grass is then put in the
 water with the clean spoon. That is a gag which binds the mouth
 of the enemy so that he can not speak against the suppliant. The
 gourd is then rolled across the road on which the traveller expects
 to start. The gourd is then rattled near his head, back and chest.
 The man then crouches in the house looking out toward the road
 on which he expects to travel. The medicine man then leaps over
 him, and then turns, and leaps over him the other way, and that
 is repeated. He is then advised to start on his journey, and is
 assured that nothing will injure. He starts, and the witch doctor

THE SHILLUK'S RELIEF IN THE GOOD MEDICINE MEN. 113

follows for a little distance rattling the gourd. The spoon represent- 756
ing the traveller remains with the medicine man, but is not in the 789
water.

In sickness the outcome may be foretold by the gourd. Spoons 755
representing different people are thrown on the gourd. If the spoon 756
for the patient rebounds, and falls on the spoon for God it is a 787
good omen as he will recover. The same test is made to deter-
mine the outcome of a fight. If the spoon of the suppliant falls
on the spoon of the enemy, it is a sign that the adversary will be
overcome.

On payment of a cow a medicine man will make a small cow
rope, which is to be worn on the arm. The rope is supposed to
tie the hands of all enemies, by a magical bond.

The medicine man makes a little circlet of grass to put on the 756
head of a person. It is made like the little circlet they wear when 777
carrying a load on their heads to protect their heads. The witch 789
doctor then spits on the circlet, and gives it to the man for whom [462]
it was made. He is told to guard it well for in case it is lost he
will die, but while he has it he will always have good fortune.
He sometimes pays as much as a cow for the bit of grass.

When the evil eye has been cast on a man and "his spirit 755
has left him", the medicine man undertakes to restore his spirit. 756
One way to do that is to take a certain kind of grass, and rub it
on the chest of the patient. He then spits on his hands, and rolls
the grass in his hands. The grass is then dipped in water, and
the water is sprinkled on the patient. The ashes from the dung
of a medicine man's cow may also be rubbed on his chest.

Unlike the evil medicine men, who work almost entirely at 756
night, the good medicine men may work in the daylight, though
even they work frequently at night, but their favourite time seems
to be just before sunrise, and just after sunset. Frequently when
a fight is imminent, and the men are sleeping together so as to be
ready for a night attack, the medicine man will leap up and shout
that power has come on him, and he insists that the people get
up, and permit him to work over them.

The medicine man strives to be spectacular in his work, and
often he tries to visualize the fate of his victims. For example,

537 that its ancestors had also been owned by Dok, son of Nyikang.
628 (That was added because the people of this district pay great honour
643 to Dok.) The king added most seriously, "The flesh of this animal
776 is as my flesh, and its blood is the same as my blood. Great disaster
will come on you if you break the covenant, for you will be cursed by
the blood."

537 The other chief men spoke. The Inspector inquired whether or
628 not they were ready to abide by the promises they were making, and
648 both sides declared they were.

628 Then the king called Akol saying "take the spear". The king
643 then took the spear to be used from the hand of his follower, who had
782 been carrying it. The spear was held up for the people to view, and
they were informed that the person, who dared to break the oath
would have the spear enter his body, even as the spear would later
enter the body of the sacrifice.

628 The next ceremony was to pull the tail of the animal. Akol
782 pulled for the Mainam faction, but one, who would have pulled for the
Fallo, faction was rejected as being too young. Then one of their
oldest men stepped out and pulled its tail. This act they looked
[787] upon as an oath, that the men pulling the tail were to bear the blame
if the peace should be broken. Disaster would come both to the man
who pulled and his family, should his faction break the agreement.

Akol then rubbed the spear on the back of the animal, and then
called for some one to give it the first thrust. A number who were
called to do it refused because they were too young, and they feared
the responsibility, because in case the feud should be renewed the
man who shed the blood would be held guilty. Even then a chance
was given to the people to refuse. They said, "If you do not want
peace, do not let the blood be spilled." A man was found to strike
the animal. He gave it a serious wound. The animal walked toward
● [787] Fallo. The people declared that the animal was showing that Fallo
was responsible for its death, that is Fallo had been the original
transgressor in the trouble. One young man from the Mainam
faction said the decision was sure to be against Fallo because the
animal had been brought from Malakal with some cattle which were
then in Fallo, and the wounded animal was almost sure to turn back
toward them. Then men from both factions speared it, and the
animal fell.

INSTALLATION OF A RETH

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resentment at the new *reth*'s presumption in occupying Fashoda at all becomes apparent later in the ceremonies. It is possible that Nyikang is believed to resent the unwarranted seizure of his powers by a person who may be unworthy of the trust. This complex attitude is one of the main problems of the installation, for it is undoubtedly an attitude which conditions the behaviour of the *reth* later in the ceremonies, and is the object of the two battles fought out by the opposing armies.

Meanwhile further preparations for the final ceremonies were being made. The small grass huts called *adul*, which form the temporary camp outside the shrine of Nyikang at Fashoda, were built by the chief of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang. This camp is used at a later period in the installation ceremonies, but it had to be built previously by these chiefs who are traditionally responsible for its erection. It is not built by orders of the chiefs to their own followers, though the latter bring in the materials, but with their own hands.

On the evening of the last day at Fashoda a procession arrived from Lul and passed through Deballo. This was the party responsible for bringing the spear of Nyikang and with it the sacred beads, which are said to have been part of the bride-wealth of Adwai, daughter of Nyikang, who married a man from the Nuba Mountains. The beads came from the shrines of Nyikang at Ocoro in Lul, and were guarded by the oldest and largest of Nyikang's spears, which was, like all really sacred objects among the Shilluk, wrapped in white cloth. They were carried on the head of a *nyireth* (a daughter of a *reth*) specially appointed for the purpose. They are said to be red and green, cylindrical and about half an inch long, but we were not allowed to see them. According to tradition, the *nyireth* and one of the *bang reth* hold a vigil by night over the beads in one of the huts called Araic on the sacred mound Aturwic. If one of the beads presents itself with a hole through it, the phenomenon is considered a good omen, and next morning it is threaded and tied to the *reth*'s ankle. If no hole is found the omen is bad, but the bead is tied to the *reth*'s ankle all the same. This ritual takes place the night after the installation of the new *reth* on the sacred stool of the Shilluk, but it takes place in strict secrecy.

INSTALLATION OF A RETH

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The assembly had by then formed up in better order, which they retained until the *reth* stopped for refreshment. Thereafter the high grass at the side of the narrow track precluded the original formation, and Kwa Ojul went ahead, followed by Kwa Okelo, and the *reth* and the main body of the people behind.

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On reaching the outskirts of Akwabai about half a mile from Debalo, the first messenger of the *reth* ran ahead to bear news to Nyikang of the *reth*'s approach. The *reth*'s messengers are said to be Kwa Otwtot, and it would follow that they are members of one clan. In fact they are chosen from many clans (Note 11).

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Shortly after the despatch of the first messenger, the *reth* retired to the Arab merchant's shop for rest and refreshment, and the crowds squatted down on the grass ahead. After an interval of ten minutes, the *reth* came out again, and, walking fast, took up his position with the Ororo and Kwareth once more, and the procession moved off again in the direction of Fashoda. By this time the party had reached Khor Arepejur and spread out in a long line several ranks deep and parallel to the watercourse. The crowd was obviously larger than at Debalo, for people had been joining in en route, and late-comers had caught up. Others broke away and ran off to nearby villages, where they left their spears and collected millet stalks for the struggle with Nyikang which was to follow.

THE CROSSING OF THE WATERCOURSE.

On the opposite side of the watercourse Jago Thabo, the titular chief of Gol Dhiang, with a small party of warriors had arrived to hand over the black bull, over which the *reth* must step before crossing Arepejur, and bearing with them a fish spear wrapped round with a grass mat, another of the many sacred spears of Nyikang. On the other side also were two members of the Kwa Mal carrying a chicken with which they swept the path of the *reth* after he had crossed over.

Just before the *reth* and his followers reached the watercourse a "dust-devil" was seen whirling down towards Fashoda and this was

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643 a significant omen to the Shilluk, for they say that Nyikang disappeared
773 in a dust-storm and returns with the wind.
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Meanwhile those warriors who had run off to fetch millet stalks had rejoined the ranks of the *reth's* army and already the dust raised by the host of Nyikang marching down towards Fashoda could be seen in the distance. Finally the army of Nyikang appeared on the horizon just west of Fashoda, the feathered head of Nyikang in their midst and Dak towering above them. At this point a messenger ran forward to Nyikang bearing a message from the *reth*. This man made two journeys between the opposing forces and returned for the second time just before the *reth* crossed the watercourse (Nite 12). The *reth*, who had been standing at the head of his forces and immediately behind his shield-bearer, then walked forward and, holding the small girl *nya kwer* by the hand, stepped over the sheep which had been cast on the ground in front of him, advanced a few paces, and stepped right over the black bull which lay bound on the very edge of the watercourse, and then walked swiftly across to the other side.

THE MARCH OF NYIKANG FROM ADODO NYIGIR TO FASHODA.

The simultaneous advance on Fashoda by Nyikang, Dak and their followers is described by the Rev. D. McClure as follows:-

"On the morning of the induction of the Shilluk king at Fashoda we went early to the village of Adodo, in the district of Nyigir, to watch the procession of Nyikang and Dak from Adodo to Fashoda, a distance of about two miles. We arrived at the village about 7 a.m., and found the place filled with men (the women keeping to their houses), and most of them gathered about a small black bull, which was being peacefully brushed with grass and the horns brightened with oil. Then a group of twelve young men called the Golbany led the bull outside the village, and made ready to start for Fashoda. They waited until three old men appeared from the huts, in which Nyikang and Dak
[78] were residing, each carrying a sacred spear, which they carried with the spearhead upwards; and the spear handle was never allowed to

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The same evening, outside the shrine of Nyikang some of the Kwa Nyikwom were gathered and busily engaged in the spiritual decontamination of persons who had obstructed the passage of Nyikang on his march to Fashoda. These persons had incurred the displeasure of Nyikang, and were in grave danger of their lives, unless steps were taken by the Kwa Nyikwom to remove the curse by rites of purification. The two parties concerned were seated about two yards apart. Each had a potsherd filled with smouldering grass in front of him. The attendant member of the Kwa Nyikwom cut off about half an inch of the hippo whip he carried and burnt it in the embers. His victim then blew upon the embers, which burst into flame, but were extinguished with water. The ashes were removed and the victim anointed with them on the back, chest, palms and soles. For this privilege each handed over a chicken and a spear as a fine for a breach of traditional observance in hindering the path of Nyikang.

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THE MAKING OF NEW FIRE AT FASHODA.

Just before dusk a group of Ororo and Kwareth began to gather near one of the wind-screens at the side of the temporary camp. All fires in Fashoda had been extinguished. A wooden club of no special origin or sanctity was brought and the shaft of a spear detached from the blade. A small hole was pierced in the handle of the club, and the spearshaft sharpened to fit this hole. The ritual kindling of fire which followed was no different from the normal method of fire-making with sticks, except that several persons co-operated in twirling the shaft. One man held the club firmly to the ground, while each man twirled the shaft in turn, the hands of the second starting at the top of the shaft, as soon as the first man's hands had reached the middle. A continuous twirling motion was thus maintained. The tinder in the hole soon began to smoulder and grass was added and in a short time burst into flames. The fact that no difficulty had been encountered and that the fire had been kindled quickly was regarded as a good omen. Men and women who had been sitting nearby came up to light their pipes from the fire, and embers were carried off in all directions to relight the fires of Fashoda. The making

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i.e., the day of the enthronement of the Reth. - Analyst

INSTALLATION OF A RETH

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PART IV.—SEQUEL.

FERTILITY RITES AND RAIN-MAKING.

(i) After his installation the *reth* took a day or two to recover, ⁶⁴³ and we are told that about a week later, a hornless cow, the colour ⁷⁸⁹ of a hippopotamus was sacrificed by the *reth* on the river bank. This ⁷⁸² was done to make the hippopotamus increase, and prosper the Shilluk hunters.

(ii) There was a slight hitch over the rain-making ceremony, ⁶⁴³ which we are informed by Mr. L. W. A. Raven, takes place in the early ⁷⁸⁹ rains each year. The *reth* is said to slaughter a bull the colour of the rain clouds. We asked the *reth* about this, and he said "Oh, it has been done at Fanyikang already by the chief of Kwa Nyikang." Resulting from this departure from custom, after only light showers, one on the last day of the installation, the rains were late, and by the end of June the *reth* was worried. The sequel is interesting. An ⁷⁸⁷ old woman of Lemmo section dreamed of the departed *reth*. This ⁷⁶⁶ showed that his spirit had not been laid to rest properly, and had not the Funeral Dance been cut short by two days? So another and smaller funeral dance of two days duration was held on the 2nd. and 3rd. July, at the same village of Pareth Fafiti. A few days later it started to pour with rain, and continued, so that it was for the Shilluk a year of plenty.

POSTSCRIPT

(W.P.G.T.)

On 6th, April I visited Fashoda on business. Three days ⁶⁴³ previously the *reth* had told me in a matter of fact way that he was going to finish off the party from Akurwa, and give them their dues, and then "they could do as they pleased, but he, the *reth*, was finished with them." Their dues were 10 head of cattle. By the 6th. I fancied this would all be over, however as I approached I met about six men carrying hides and about ten women carrying household utensils

643 on their heads. I recognised them as Kwa Nyikwom going back to Akurwa. Their return had been hastened by the early rain.

778 Fashoda had the party spirit, particularly the *reth*. He at once
643 led me to the centre of Fashoda and I sat down in the shade of a cattle
535 byre to be inconspicuous, for something was about to happen. Nyikang, Dak and Cal were all packed up and ready to go to Akurwa. They were in fact all three standing outside Aturwic. Everyone was dancing and singing.

The *reth* went up the mound and spoke to the people carrying Nyikang. Suddenly Dak and Cal followed by Nyikang came down from the mound and made a bee-line for me.

They rushed to where I was sitting and started dancing at me two paces away. The *reth* was dancing with them. They continued dancing till I gave them the token small piece of grass, which represented a bull, which I would give them at Kodok. They then went on, and did the same to any of the chiefs they found at Fashoda. The chief of Lul knew the honour would cost him a bull, and so he stayed discreetly in his house.

When Nyikang had thus gathered what he wanted for the journey home, they all danced round and round for an hour or more with the *reth* beside them. Then they became more solemn and as a final gesture they stood the *reth* under the folds of Nyikang's wrappings and sang the songs of Nyikang. The casting of the mantle of
[77] Nyikang over the new *reth* was to bring him back luck. Nyikang, Dak,
643 the *reth* and the *reth's* *jal tyel kwom*, his chamberlain, were in the middle
778 of the small throng. The Ororo woman, who had enticed him away from *nyakwer* at the time of the installation, and some of the *reth's* sisters, were sitting around in front. I was about 10 paces away.
[78] A small girl by my side swooned, and was possessed by Nyikang—
[74] when she grew up, she would have charge of one of his shrines.

Then at last the party formed up and dashed off at a trot, on their way. The *reth* escorted them about 200 yards, and then came back. "Come and have a bowl of beer," he said "because it is hot."

SUDAN NOTES AND RECORDS

766 The *ororo* then went to fetch the body from Debwor. The remains
[782] were put in a special bag made from the hide of a cow-calf sacrificed for the occasion and wrapped in white cloth and the party set out for Kujo, travelling by night and with an advance guard who were entitled to seize small gifts and ransoms from those unfortunate enough to cross their path.¹

[782] On the arrival of the party at Kujo an ox was sacrificed as *akadh* (a sacrifice to allow them to enter the village) and the remains of *reth* Dak were brought into the *gol dwong*, by now transformed into his *kengo*. The grave was then dug inside one of the two huts² and on the second day *heglig* wood (*Balanites aegyptica*) was cut and a new bier (*pam*) was constructed, bound with leather thongs taken from the hide of the ox sacrificed as *akadh*. On this the remains were placed, lowered into the grave and buried. Immediately [533] afterwards the chief (*jago*) of the *ororo* came out singing the song of Nyikang which is the usual signal for the start of public ceremonies and the song was taken up by those outside. On this occasion the crowd proceeded to the river [783] to bathe themselves. Apparently the spirit of the *reth* himself had appeared [787] to one of the *bangreth* in a dream and had demanded that this untraditional rite of purification should take place.³ After this the duties of the *ororo* were completed and the *kwa* Nyikir took over. *kwa* Nyikir come from Fadong north of Fashoda and are specifically concerned with the funeral dances of Shilluk *reths*.⁴

[782] ¹ Fr. Hurst informs me that they travelled fast but not for long distances. They rested for the day at some village where a bull was sacrificed. Only a small party travelled with the *reth's* remains and it was noticeable that the people kept out of the way. At every large watercourse a sheep was sacrificed, again called *akadh*. The word is derived from the verb *hadho*, "to cross over."

² I was not present at Kujo until later, and had I been there, I should not have been allowed to witness the actual burial. The procedure was described to me later and I can only give the bare outline of what happened. I was informed that the grave is of the usual Shilluk pattern—a straight slit-trench with a side chamber below, in which the body is placed lying full length on the right side.

[177] ³ I was unable to discover where this idea originated and whether it had any special significance. I suspect Christian associations since *reth* Dak had been educated for three years at the elementary school at Doleib Hill (American Presbyterian Mission) and had retained links with them.

[173] ⁴ Nyikir. "Children of the Nile (Kir)." Tradition relates that these people are not Shilluk in origin but were found by Nyikang at a place called Podho Ngu ("the lion country"). Nyikang was attracted by their drumming. On Nyikang's approach they fled into the river where Nyikang captured them and made them his drummers, their specific duty being to beat the drums at the funeral wakes of all subsequent *reths*. I am indebted to Mr. J. L. Baker for this information.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF RETH DAK WAD FADIET 161

Just before dawn they set up the four royal drums on end in holes specially dug in the ground² and in the centre of the village opposite the *kengo*. They were beaten for a short while as a signal that the public ceremonies of mourning would begin that day. In addition a fire was lit using fire sticks (*pic mac*), an important ritual item in any Shilluk ceremony, and a sheep was sacrificed. 766 [533] [372]

I reached Kujo that afternoon just in time to see the *kwa* Nyikir enter the village again, singing as they came and carrying the spear of Nyikang wrapped in white cloth and also a basket which I was told contained certain sacred relics including the bell or Nyikang (*orok Nyikang*). The party stepped over a sheep held to the ground in front of them¹ and then took up their position round the drums. [778]

Meanwhile an ox had been tethered near to the drums and a Shilluk warrior stood by, spear in hand. At a given signal he plunged his spear into the ox, missing the heart, and causing only a slight wound in the haunch, with the result that it broke away and had to be despatched outside the village. No particular attention was paid to this unfortunate incident which might have been regarded as an ill omen, and immediately the drums began to beat, the *kwa* Nyikir skipping round them four times and again stepping on to and over a sheep tethered to the ground. The main body of spectators consisting of important persons and the occupants of Kujo and neighbouring villages then entered the arena. These people carrying miller stalks, sticks and swords, but no spears, danced round the drums in an anti-clockwise direction singing the song of Nyikang followed by that of *reth* Dak Nyikang and finally a new song composed in honour of the deceased. After several minutes of dancing in this manner, the crowd moved forward and knelt facing the shrine clapping their hands as a sign of grief. These royal mourning songs reflect the Shilluks' attitude towards their kings. *Agwet wad Nyidhongo piny apath cis Yor wad Nyidhongo labo arieny*, "Agwet wad Nyidhongo, the earth is [782] [787] [535] 533 539 766

² These holes are specially dug beforehand and bells and other sacred objects put beneath the drums. For normal social events Shilluk drums are laid horizontally or lean against supports set in the ground. [534]

¹ The significance of this act is not clear and Shilluk merely say that it must be done; it is "according to custom," *kweng*. I have, however, frequently heard it said that the act, *akada*, is intended to remove impurities which might be harmful to the *reth*. The procedure is followed in all sorts of ritual situations in which the *reth* is concerned. It will be remembered that the *reth* steps over a bull-calf when he leaves Debalo and over a black bull at Arepejur on his way to Fashoda on the first day of the installation ceremonies. It will also be remembered that in the old days, prior to *reth* Fadiet, a man (and a girl) was subjected to the same treatment as the bulls and sheep, and, though it is not true that he invariably died in the process, he was never allowed to come into direct contact with the *reth*. See Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 54 and p. 79, Note 21. [643] [783]

INSTALLATION OF RETH KUR.

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4. *jago* Aturwel (Fadit Division)
5. *kwanyireth* Akwei (Detwok Division)
6. *jago* Ongwany (Muomo Division)
7. *jago* Olwak (Fanyidwai Division)
8. *kwanyireth* Dhikwan (Nyijok Division)
9. *kwanyireth* Yomon (Lul Division)
10. *kwanyireth* Geny (Malakal Division)*

I informed them of three candidates who on various grounds were unacceptable to the Government and left them. On the night of the 13th matters were hastened because *nyireth* Kur was summoned by the Electoral College and marched with his followers to Akwabai to await daylight and formal acceptance. I arrived at 7.30 a.m. on the morning of the 14th and found the new *reth* already in Fashoda which he had entered after stepping over a sheep tethered to the ground⁶. I waited for two hours while certain rituals (*kwere*) was performed, including the making of new fire by rubbing fire-sticks together (*pic mac*), water boiled over the fire and used for the shaving of the *reth's* head. The chiefs—a very large cross-section of Shilluk society, for only *kwanyireth* Deng of Apac, and the chiefs of Tonga and Fanyikang had not arrived—together with the men of Kodok and others present shouted their allegiance and a black ox (no entire animal could be found) was speared, stood looking dazed for about five minutes and then fell on its left side (a good omen) just by the royal cattle byre. The chiefs dispersed on the 15th, leaving the *reth* to contemplate for a few days in his father's home, while Fashoda was being organised to house a new *reth* after being deserted for several weeks owing to *reth* Dak's absence in hospital.

Mr. Baker has also remarked that in the list of chiefs given above, only the first three are essential at this meeting. "The others are truly only witnesses or at most proposers of candidates." Thomson, speaking of the election of *reth* Dak, says "it was clearer to me than before that the choice rests entirely with the chiefs of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang". "I doubt whether even the chief of the *kwareth* (*jago jung kwareth*) has any influence: he and the other members of the College have only to listen to a decision."

I had not the time to attend all the events or to investigate all the aspects of the preparations which led up to the installation on this occasion. Mr. Thomson and I between us had been able to cover much of the ground on the accession of *reth* Anci. Mr. Thomson was able to add further details on the installation of *reth* Dak. It must be remembered, however, that the death of one *reth* and the installation of another takes not less than a year to complete and that the ceremonies are set over a wide field from one end of Shilluk

* See Howell & Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 31-33.

* The significance of this act (*akadh*) is discussed in a previous article: S.N.R. Vol. 33 Part I.

* Howell & Thomson, *ibid.* p. 75.

* Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 152.

769 for they occasionally pray to their ancestors in the same way, and also to
 782 the dead chief of the village. The chief is looked upon as a father. Infre-
 776 quently they pray to the spirit of some departed friend. When a person
 787 has a pleasant dream about a departed friend, a prayer is frequently
 addressed to his spirit, as he is well disposed. The mother, brothers and
 sisters may also be invoked.

769 When prayer is to be offered to the spirit of a dead person, a female
 776 sheep is brought to the grave. If the person making the prayer is not the
 782 son of the deceased, the right ear is cut from the sheep, and tied to the
 ankle of the person making the offering, and the wounded ear is washed in
 a gourd of water, so that the blood remains in the water, and then the
 water is poured on the grave, and part of it is thrown in the eye of the
 sun (that is thrown out in front of the sun). It is for God so that it will
 go to him. The sheep becomes the property of the heir of the deceased.
 782 The prayer is offered before the ear is cut off. If the son offers, prayer is
 made to God and to the deceased, and then the sheep is killed as soon as
 the signs are right. The sheep is cut open, and the contents of the stomach
 and bowels are thrown on the house of the offerer, and then the meat is
 cooked. The meat can not be tasted until the oldest living wife of the
 deceased takes some of the soup in a small gourd, which is covered with
 a small native mat, and pours it on the grave. The soup that remains in
 the gourd is poured out in front of the house. The old men are then called
 782 to take the lead in eating the sacrifice. Women of all ages may eat of the
 sacrifice, but only the boys and old men of the males may eat, as no man
 of military age may eat of it. When the feast is finished the bones are
 carefully collected, and thrown into the river, as it would be bad if the
 bones of a devoted sheep should be gnawed by a dog.

While there is no set form for the prayer, and its length is determined
 by the sheep, yet they are all very similar, and the following is an example.

539 "We praise you, you, who are God, it was you, who gave me my
 769 father, who begot me. I pray to you also my father. Why did you go to
 776 the earth, and keep silence? Was not this your house before? When evil
 782 comes to your house, why do you not pray to God? Your house is given
 as a plaything to the people. You went to the presence of God, and we
 thought that nothing evil would befall us again, after you left. Now help.

God. Why do you leave the responsibility of saving on God alone? God's spirit becomes tired (from work), and he leaves people, and they die. Why do you not see and save us? You went to the ground, and you have forgotten that a person from another house does not guard yours. »

The prayer is continued in this strain until the sheep, responding to the necessity of nature, relieves itself, and that is taken as an omen that the prayer has been heard, and a favourable answer will be given. That which comes from the sheep is put on the grave. If the omen is delayed, the sheep may be taken to a house, and left there to be brought out another day. The prayer life among the Shilluks is developed by adversity, as they seldom if ever pray, when in prosperous circumstances.

Their veneration of Nikawng does not blind their eyes to his faults. When a prayer has been offered to Nikawng, and the answer is not given as had been hoped, the disappointed one curses Nikawng. That is true especially in the case of death. When death is approaching, they sacrifice to Nikawng and God, and pray that death may be averted. If the death occurs the bereaved ones curse Nikawng, because he did not exert himself in their behalf. Apparently they do not pray to him that the condition of the deceased may be happy after death. He is sometimes spoken of as the son of God, but it is not definite, as they also use the same term in regard to his father, and one or two others.

They maintain that Nikawng still lives. He is even now watching over the Shilluks, and should he die the whole race would die, but in spite of their belief they have a sacred house for Nikawng, which is similar to the sacred houses in which the later kings have been buried. This fact weakens their statement that they believe that he still lives.

The departed leader comes back to his country on certain occasions. At night he can be heard in the sacred house, which has been dedicated to him. He sharpens his spear, or beats with his club, but when the attendants enter the house, no visible form is to be seen, but they know that the sounds were made by him. He may also ring a bell that is in the sacred house. When he is heard in the sacred house, the Shilluks say: «Nikawng walks in his country». They rejoice because it is an indication that he is actively watching over his people.

When the rains do not begin as soon as the natives think they should.

776 the chief of the district offers a sacrifice to Nikawng so that the rains may
782 come. After the prayer has been offered, and the rain comes, if it comes
781 with a rushing sound they say that Nikawng walks in the storm, and the
rushing sound is made by his passing.

643 Once the departed king returned so that he could be seen by the eye of
776 man. The first kings did not die, but ascended. At last a time came when
775 the kings were to be identified more fully with the people, and they were to
776 be buried. The proper burial of the first king to receive that attention
from his subjects, was of such great importance that Nikawng returned to
give minute instructions as to how the king should be buried. Some say
that he actually appeared in the flesh. Others say that he appeared to a
certain old chief in a dream, and made known to him how one of his kingly
descendants should be buried.

776 At certain times the old woman, who has charge of his sacred house
778 places food in it for him. At the time of new moon the food is placed in his
782 house, and may be offered to him one day, or four days. Very early in the
782 morning the food is taken out, and eaten by the attendants. They say that
Nikawng has tasted it. Should the offering entirely disappear in the night
it would be taken as a serious omen. Milk is also placed in the house with
the food. Should the old woman keeper of the sacred house dream of the
king during the month, she places an offering of food in his house.

643 Similar offerings are made to the other kings, and also they may be
767 made to an ancestor.

776 When the harvest is beginning, before the people may eat of their grain
782 they must take an offering of their first fruits to Nikawng. After Nikawng
has been given his taste of the first fruits the people may eat freely. An
offering of the first fruits is also taken to each of the sacred houses of the
other kings.

769 Many of them take an offering of the first fruits to the grave of an
ancestor, usually the father. When offering to a father the grain is made
into a sort of batter, and poured out on the grave. The man then says that
he has given his father a taste. The worship at the family shrine dies out
when the immediate family is all gone. In the case of the kings it is kept
by all the people.

775 The power of Nikawng is upheld to some extent by a class of religious

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devotees. By some means the spirit of the king is supposed to enter into ⁷⁷⁵ people. They sometimes say that he is taken by the wind king. The spirit ⁷⁷⁶ of any of the kings who did not die may enter a person, but the greater ⁷⁸⁷ part profess to be acting for Nikawng, though Dok has a numerous following. ⁷⁵⁶ People thus possessed are said to be servants or slaves of the particular king claiming their allegiance.

The beginning of the possession is indicated by hysteria. When a person is first taken he walks about with his head swaying from side to side, and his eyes shut. Often they look as though they are going to fall, but they are always able to maintain their balance. In the night they wander about or else ward off sleep by singing songs. When a person first shows these signs, they send for a recognized servant of that king. The spirit is able to tell the people what king he represents.

The servant of the king treats the case. He makes a fire, and puts a ⁷⁸⁷ vessel of oil on it. The oil is permitted to boil, and then the patient is ⁷⁵⁵ taken near the fire. A head is put on the forehead of the person to be treated. The person in charge of the case puts one hand on the victim's head. With the other hand he seizes his hand, and thrusts it into the boiling oil or butter. If the patient is burned and cries out, and tries to run away, the possession is said to be a light case, and curable. In that case the dung of a dog is brought, and burned. The patient is then put under a cloth, and the ashes of the dog's dung, and fire are also put under the covering. The spirit is then said to be driven out. If that patient has a second attack, the spirit cannot be driven off again. If the patient is not burned by the oil, the possession is said to be complete, and measures ⁷⁵⁶ are taken to initiate him into the order of the servants of the king. Two sheep are killed, and their skins are prepared to be worn by the patient. Beads are fastened on the forehead, and about the ankle, and a string of ostrich egg shell beads is put about the neck. A spear is then placed in the patient's hand, and boiling oil or butter is placed on his forehead. The king is then revealed by hysterical actions on the part of the new servant of the king. ⁷⁵⁶ The neighbours give presents of ornaments to the new servant of the king. ⁷⁵³ and the person who had charge of the case gives him a gourd. A sheep is also given, and its right ear is cut off, and beads are fastened to it. The ear is then worn. The servant of the king in charge of the case gets a

756 good fee. It will not be less than two sheep, a fighting spear, a fish spear, a hoe, and a cloth. The patient is then assigned to a separate house.

[562] Both men and women are eligible to become servants of the king, but
593] the women predominate. This ceremony does not release a woman from her husband, but when they become old they may wander about, and follow other men.

People who are not in sympathy with the ceremony are not readily admitted to see the performance. Some say that the hand is held in the boiling oil or butter, but others say that it is barely touched to the oil.

An indication of the fact that the power of Nikawng among the Shilluks is not as great as their professions would indicate, is furnished by comparing the servants of the king with the witch doctors. They work along the same lines, but the powers of the witch doctors are greater. The possessed are supposed to be holy, but they are among the most lustful of the people. They make greater claim to personal piety than the witch doctors, but their lives are no better.

[462] The women of this class are much more active than the men, who are usually idlers.

[726] They are able to give protection, for when a fight is imminent one is called to sprinkle ashes on the warriors, and Nikawng is invoked thus, "Nikawng, this village has your ashes on it, do not give it to death".

[787] They are also able to foretell future events. They often profess to be surprised at their own messages, and they are able to get into communication with the dead.

The chief work of the servants of the king is to cure disease. The so-called cures are nearly always of a magical nature.

775 The spirit of the king may not always be active in the afflicted person,
776 but it comes and goes. When a servant of the king under the power of the
756 spirit makes a statement he is not responsible for what he says, as it is merely a manifestation of the king, but if he does a wrong act under the same guidance, he is held responsible.

756 The actual workings of the servants of the king are not easy to witness, as they do not like to work before a hostile gathering. The tales of their cures told by eye witnesses vary, as they are influenced by their faith or lack of faith in the power of the medium. A few illustrations may be given

of the working of the servants of Nikawong. The stories have been told by different Shilluks, and while they vary in minor details they have been essentially the same. 756

In one form of healing they use a plant. The root is taken, and chewed very fine by the healer. He then puts his mouth to the nostrils of the patient and causes the chewed plant to pass from his mouth to the nostril of the sick person. He then puts his mouth over the nose of the other, and blows very hard so that the medicine will be blown into the head of the patient. If the victim should sneeze after the treatment, he will recover. If he does not, he will die. 755

The servants of the king are especially qualified to cast birds out of people. Often, when a person is asleep, a bird perches on him, and later gains an entrance into his body. When the healer is called, she takes the sufferer to an ant-hill, and compels him to lie on the mound. A chicken is killed, cut open, and thrown out on the plain for the dispossessed birds to enter. Then a lighted torch is passed around the head of the patient in a circle. When they start home the healer follows, and fans the air with her clothes to scare the birds away. Some other woman carries a spear, which she thrusts into the air to kill the birds. When the entrance to the enclosure about the house is reached, a spear is stuck into both sides of it. After the patient enters the house the healer strikes the house and sticks a spear near the door. That spear is to keep the birds away, and is to belong to the healer when the case is cured. However it is usually taken, even when the cure is not effected, as it is to compensate for the lost time of the healer. The fee for such a treatment is a spear, a hoe, a cloth, and two sheep one of which is killed. This treatment is for the birds, which enter children. Adults are afflicted by a different kind of bird, which must be cast out in another way. 756

Colds which affect children are treated by taking the patient to an ant-hill near the river. A small grass house is constructed, and the child, and its mother placed within. The house is then set on fire, and the servant of the king cries "The house is on fire". The mother rushes out with the child, and hastens to the village. The healer follows fanning the child, with her clothes. The mother and child enter the house. The healer enters the house, and then turns with her face out of the door, and fans outward 755

755 to keep the disease from entering. The mother is warned against looking back.

[75] When a child cries persistently, with no apparent cause, they reach the conclusion that he is being drawn by one of the kings. The servant of the king is called, and given a lot of a sheep. The parents say they want to know, who is drawing the child. The first thing to do is to take cowrie shells, and string beads on them. Each shell has a different coloured head. The shells are named for their kings, and also for the deceased grandparents of the child. One shell is also put in for the child. The shells are all taken in the hand, and thrown out on a skin. When they fall if another shell touches that belonging to the child, it is being drawn by the spirit of that king or person. The child is then given the name of the person drawing it, and a cure is effected. If at the first attempt no one is indicated the test is repeated until some one is indicated. All the people in the room then cower, and pray to the drawing spirit as the leader directs.

756 The servants of the king claim the power to converse with the dead. When a spirit is to be called the medium goes into the house with the relatives. She goes to one corner of the room and retires behind a screen. The door is closed to make the room dark. She then takes a gourd with some grain in it and twirls it to make a noise that will call the spirit of the departed. The spirit of the king then takes powerful possession of the medium, and she speaks in a peculiar voice. The usual thing is for the spirit to greet the assembled people, and they reply. The spirit then says: [76] "Where I am it is nice, but I was killed by a certain person (naming him) or I would not have died." The death was caused by a charm cast on the victim. "I will kill that man, do not quarrel with him. When I finish greeting you I will return." Sometimes such a message causes the relatives of the deceased to try to kill the one who cast the charm.

756 An instance of their working is often given in this community. Two men made a trip to the Nuer country. On the return trip one of them, 756 named Shel, was separated from his companion. The other man concluded 757 that he had been killed by a lion, and returned with that report. The people of the village mourned him as dead, but they waited two months. Then a servant of the king was called. She went through the usual forms, and then exclaimed: "Ah the man". The spirit greeted the people, and

they made answer. The spirit then said: «I was eaten by lions, the lions were two, had the lion been one I would not have been eaten, for you know me, that I am strong». The people replied: «We know that you are strong». He continued: «I am sorry for my mother only». At that she wept. They beat the drum, and he said «I return». His brother alone doubted, and said: «My spirit is strong, my brother lies». He was chided with unbelief. The next morning they buried a wooden effigy of Shil, and had a mourning dance for him. In the midst of the dance he returned, and wanted to know who had died that they were mourning. The dance was stopped. The medium was humiliated, and refused to attempt to work in other cases.

Such cases as the foregoing are usually treated by the women. The men servants of the king treat the river sickness. The patient with two sheep is taken to the river. The sheep must be male and female. The head of the male is put under the water. It is then taken out, and its four feet tied together, with its head between the front feet. The healer then puts it into the river, and as it is carried off by the current it takes the sickness with it. The female sheep is the fee of the healer. They then go to the village and kill a sheep for a feast.

When a servant of a king begs he says: «The king is begging you», and if his requests are modest they are granted.

In death the servants of the king are honoured by the same kind of burial as is accorded to a chief.

They look upon it as a form of spirit possession. The spirit is good, or at least not as malignant as some of the other spirits that may take possession of a person. A failure in no way lessens their power, as the people are sure that some other healer would have been successful. While a successful cure brings great glory to the healer.

This class typifies a longing of the native mind. They are seeking some power to bridge the gulf between the finite and infinite. The power that belongs to God is to pass to the king, and then by his spirit to be given to his servant, who is to use it for the good of the people.

The mediums prey upon the people. Often they seem to be sincere in the belief that they have the power claimed, though just as often they seem to realize that they are deceiving the people.

- 224 tormentors and overturn and smash the canoe, killing or maiming its occupants. In Tonga I once saw a youth whose shoulder had almost been torn away by a hippopotamus. With some companions he had been hunting in the Bahr-el-Gazal when the hippo they were attacking charged the canoe and flung its occupants into the water. He had the misfortune to fall near the enraged animal which seized his shoulder with its powerful teeth and tore the flesh. He had been taken first to the mission of Yoynyang where the priest dressed his wound as best he could, and then brought on to Tonga. When I saw him he was sitting quite impassively, enduring the pain with stoicism as the Sister dressed his torn shoulder while waiting for a boat to take him to the hospital in Malakal.

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- 224 787 One peculiar feature of a hippo hunt is that the hunters, before beginning their operations, sacrifice a hen by drowning it in the river. They then bury it in the reeds at the river's edge and one (sometimes two) of them, shaking convulsively, goes into a kind of ecstatic frenzy during which he foretells the number of beasts that will be killed; one may plump for three, two large ones and a small, the other for five, three big and two small. It is remarkable that a single 'shaker's' forecast is often completely accurate, though whether this is due to his making a lucky guess, or being prompted by his guardian angel, I would hesitate to say. It is significant, however, that in later life many of these amateur prophets become witch doctors.

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- 461 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' is a saying as true of the Shilluk as of any other race of mankind, and after all his sowing and reaping, building and thatching, fishing and hunting, his 'capacity for innocent enjoyment is just as great as any honest man's'. A European travelling through Shilluk country on a hot, windless afternoon and seeing a cloud of dust rising into the air at some distance before him might wonder what freak of nature was causing a dust storm in that particular spot, when all around was so still and breathless. Approaching nearer to the phenomenon,

Shilluk Government

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wright in the deliberations of the electorate. Sometimes, too, when the final choice is a difficult one, it would seem that the selectors have recourse to augury and divination. A number of small stones, one for each candidate, is placed in a fierce fire. A stone that glows red indicates that, under the prince it represents, cattle will be plentiful in the country; a white-hot stone would presage an abundance of grain in the new rule; one glowing both white and red would entail an era of plenty both in cattle and grain, whilst that which merely blackens and bursts would unanimously be rejected.

When the decision is at last reached, one of the great chiefs goes unobtrusively and by night to the village where the king-elect is living. During the deliberations of the electorate all nyireths are required to remain in their own homes and not to approach the neighbourhood of Fashoda; this precaution is taken to ensure that no nyireth should rush the capital and usurp the power for himself. The chief challenges the nyireth to a mock battle and when he has thus given a token of his prowess and valour the news of his election is formally broken to him. He is brought quietly, again under cover of night, to Fashoda, and at daybreak inducted with ceremony into his capital. When these preliminaries are over and the reth-elect is settled in Fashoda, the news of his election is noised abroad, and chiefs and nyireths come in from all parts of the country to pay their respects to their new king. The situation has become somewhat easier now, since with the accomplished fact, there is little likelihood of an armed insurrection taking place. There is always of course the possibility of any nyireth asserting his right to the throne and proving it by slaying the king in single combat, and in former days it was customary for the king to slaughter many of the nyireths as he could lay his hands on—a most

The period between the election and the solemn installation of the king is roughly a year. During this time the land is, as it were, dead, for the spirit of Nyikang still lacks its habitual abode, and is under interdict. No great public dances may be held, except the funeral dances for the late

693 it was an old man who was stretched across the path for the
796 king and his followers to step across. With such a large following, there was more stepping on, than stepping across, and the man was trampled to death.) His partisans follow suit and the whole army crosses the watercourse and marches towards Fashoda. As it does so, the supporters of Nyikang, bearing the two effigies in their midst, are seen approaching from Adodo. The two forces halt a short distance apart, threats are shouted, weapons are brandished—not spears, fortunately, but millet stalks—there is the usual preliminary feinting and dodging and half-hearted rushes, and then the two armies hurl themselves forward and join in the great mock battle. The air is thick with dust raised by the padding feet of the combatants and clouded with flying millet stalks. When the air clears it is seen that the reth is no longer at the head of his forces. His army has been defeated and he has been captured by Nyikang and carried into Fashoda.

[772] Nyikang, closely followed by the reth, advances to an open
[775] space in front of the shrine. A cow is sacrificed and then a screen of white cloth is erected in front of the doorway of the shrine, and the sacred stool of Nyikang is placed behind it so as to be hidden from the public view. The effigy of Nyikang is put down upon the stool and a period of chanting and invocation ensues, the reth meanwhile kneeling and clasping the legs of the stool. Then Nyikang is lifted up and carried into the shrine and the reth takes his place on the stool. This is the solemn moment of the installation; it is the equivalent of the crown of kingship being placed on the head of the monarch. The Shilluk believe that at this moment the spirit of Nyikang enters into and takes possession of the body of the reth. After some time spent in communing with Nyikang, the reth, accompanied by his 'bride', who during all this time has never left his side, leaves the place of installation and moves across to a group of huts temporarily erected for his use. Another cow is sacrificed and the king enters one of the huts for the ritual washing of his feet by his wives. This bathing is done in hot and cold water and signifies that the

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difficult and weary travel, but they are hazy as to what kind of life is led in that country and suppose it to be but a continuation of the kind of life they know on this earth. Meanwhile the spirits which have not yet started on the journey to Pa Jwok hover round their graves and former homesteads and may do harm to their living relations, and a person who has died in enmity with anyone is greatly to be feared by his late enemy. All these spirits, therefore, have to be placated by offerings and sacrifices. Someone may be taken ill, and the anxious relatives call in the witch doctor to tell them which spirit is responsible for bringing this evil upon them. He consults his oracle, such as an empty calabash to which he listens intently, and then informs the people that Nyikang says such-and-such a one, recently dead, is responsible and that sacrifice and prayer must be offered to his spirit, and perhaps intercession and sacrifice is to be made at the grave of the sick person's dead father, that his spirit may prevail upon the malignant one to remove the curse from his family. Accordingly a sheep is led to the grave of the person to be placated. The right ear is cut off and washed in water and the water poured over the grave. Prayer is made both to God, Jwok-Atang (on such private occasions as this without the intercession of Nyikang), and to the dead person. Then the sheep is killed and the meat cooked. Some of the soup is poured over the grave and the meat is then eaten by those who have taken part in the sacrifice.

All former kings, and in some cases great chiefs, have their shrines. These shrines consist of two or three huts built in the usual Shilluk fashion but with much better *architecture than those afforded by the ordinary commoner and enclosed within a reed or thorn fence. As befitting the great spirit that dwells within, these shrines are kept in good repair and spotlessly clean by the duly appointed guardians. One such shrine is situated just a few hundred yards from the mission at Derwek. It consists of two large huts surrounded by a fence and is dedicated to Nyala, a woman, surprisingly enough. She was the daughter of the seventeenth*

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685 and that one of the tins containing ninety piastres (about
 754 18s.) had been stolen. The District Chief was called and held
 [630] solemn court on the verandah of the house. He, however,
 [692] could not discover the thief and therefore gave judgment
 that the owner of the box was responsible for the safety of
 the money entrusted to him and that he was to refund the
 missing money and to be held in custody until he did so.
 This seemed rather unfair on Henry, the owner of the box,
 since he had gained nothing from acting as banker to the
 rest, yet unless the thief was found there was nothing that
 we could do about the matter and it seemed to be closed.
 Two days later we were surprised to learn that one of the
 boys had owned up to the theft and had refunded the
 money. We were pleased, too, because we thought that
 although the boy had acted meanly in stealing his com-
 panion's savings, at least he had been man enough to come
 forward to save Henry from having to pay the penalty for
 the theft. We were speedily disillusioned as to his motive for
 confessing; the other boys knew perfectly well that Henry
 was innocent of taking the money, and they had a very
 strong idea who had. Accordingly they subscribed to buy a
 sheep which was given to the local witch doctor as a fee for
 [626] finding the thief. The jal yath let it be known that he would
 [789] sacrifice the sheep at a certain hour, and the moment the
 [152] animal died so would the culprit; the latter had not the
 courage to defy the curse but promptly confessed his guilt.

782 When an animal is slain in sacrifice, great importance is
 attached to the position in which it falls. If the animal is a
 bull, it is not usually slain outright, but wounded by a spear
 thrust and allowed free. If it should wander towards the
 river or towards the shrine before it dies, that is taken as a
 sign that the sacrifice is acceptable to Nyikang. So, too, is it
 taken as a good omen if the beast in collapsing falls on its
 left side; if it should fall on its right side then the portents
 are unfavourable, and should it fall neither to right nor left
 but simply crumple up and fall forward with forefeet
 doubled beneath it, that would presage some terrible disaster.
 The actual spearing of the victim is generally done by

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a Bareth of the shrine before which the sacrifice is made. 782
The king or chief who is present and who dedicates the 787
offering stands by and leads public prayer to Nyikang for 825
the blessing sought. The meat of the sacrifice is eaten by all 262
present with special perquisites for the Bareth guardian of 793
the shrine. Care is taken when cutting up the meat not to
break any bones. These are collected and thrown into the
Nile. The horns are stuck in the ground in front of the shrine, 237
and the skin, scraped and cleaned, remains in the shrine as
a mat for the spirit that dwells therein.

When the new corn is cut, tithes are given to Nyikang. 243
Part of these belong to the Bareth and the remainder is 782
ground into flour and made into a thin porridge which is
poured on to the ground in front of and inside the shrine as
a libation to the residing spirit.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

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send for himself during the intervening months, and he ⁸⁴³
spends the time drinking bowls of beer and smoking pipes of
rank tobacco with his cronies, discussing the many com-
plexities of women and particularly that formidable mother-
in-law of his whom he may never visit, may never even meet, ^[606]
even going to the length of turning aside from her path and
averting his head should he chance to see her on the road.
He dreams up, too, rosy dreams of his daughter, for it is ^[842]
always a daughter of course, who will be the apple of his
eye and the pride of his life during her childhood and who
will bring in many heads of fat cattle when she becomes of
marriageable age.

On the day of the birth, a custom, of interest to all, but ⁸⁵¹
fraught with a certain amount of apprehension and anxiety ⁸³⁶
to some, takes place. Before the mother is given her baby to
nurse she must name publicly all her former lovers. Failure
to do so, it is averred, will result in the death of the child, and ^[626]
should she refuse to confess she would not be given the baby
at all, but it would be reared by a foster-mother. It may be ^[608]
that the girl can say with honesty that she has had no pre-
nuptial amours, and that up to the time of her marriage
she had preserved her virginity intact. Since the general
character of such a girl would be fairly well known in her
own village, her word would be accepted and she would be
given the child. But if perchance the infant should die, it ^[626]
would be taken as a sign that she had lied. Unfortunately ^[787]
such paragons of virtue among Shilluk maidenhood are
rather rare, and the term 'virgin' applied to a nubile girl
has something of an unmeaning character, useful only in dis-
tinguishing her from her married sisters. Nobody then is in
the least shocked or surprised when the girl recites a number
of names of men with whom she has been before her
marriage.

The men thus accused may either admit the charge or ⁸⁵¹
indignantly deny it. If a man admits his transgression he ⁸⁴⁴
must pay the outraged husband three sheep or goats, or, if ⁶⁹⁵
he is the father of the child just born, three cows. If he
denies the accusation he undergoes a variation of 'trial by

851 ordeal'. He brings a sheep to the village where the girl is;
 684 a corner of the animal's ear is cut off and the piece put into
 695 a bowl of water and the man, the girl and the baby are
 825 sprinkled with the resultant blood and water. If by the
 787 following morning the child is still alive the man is adjudged
 to have lied and must pay compensation as above. If, how-
 ever, the baby should die during the night, then the girl is
 held to have accused the man falsely.

851 During the reign of King Kur, whose despotic methods of
 684 government resulted in his being removed from office, a
 695 much grimmer and more realistic trial by ordeal was enacted.
 178 The man and the girl were brought to a channel of the Nile
 643 where a large crocodile habitually dwelt. By some means
 825 this brute was called up from the depths and the pair placed
 equidistant from it were made to swim across the channel,
 or, if they could not swim, were launched on flimsy rafts.
 The one that the crocodile seized was deemed to be guilty
 of lying. It is on record that one youth about to be put to
 the test in this manner protested thus, 'I know that I
 am innocent all right, but how does the crocodile know
 that?'

846 After the proceedings of the naming and the trying of the
 852 lovers is concluded, the mother is allowed to have her child.
 553 If it should be a boy, the father, who has been informed of
 the birth and sex of the child though as yet he is not allowed
 to see him, sends a present of a miniature harpoon, presum-
 ably indicative of his desire that his son should grow up to be
 a mighty hunter of hippopotami. Then a small basket is
 852 woven and filled with ashes of burnt cow dung. One of the
 604 baby's maternal uncles hangs the basket round his waist
 calling upon Nyikang to bless the child and to make him a
 good husbandman. (The basket containing the ashes repre-
 sents the large family basket filled with grain.) He then
 walks round the hut where the baby is, beats upon the wall
 with the basket and then throws it into the road. If the child
 is a girl the ashes are mixed with water and the uncle makes
 models of a bull and a cow. Nyikang's blessing is invoked upon
 the child that at her marriage she may command a good